The streets of France...
The streets of Canada. FRENCH STRIKES page 6 –7

Volume 85 • **Monday, February 12, 1996** • Number 52

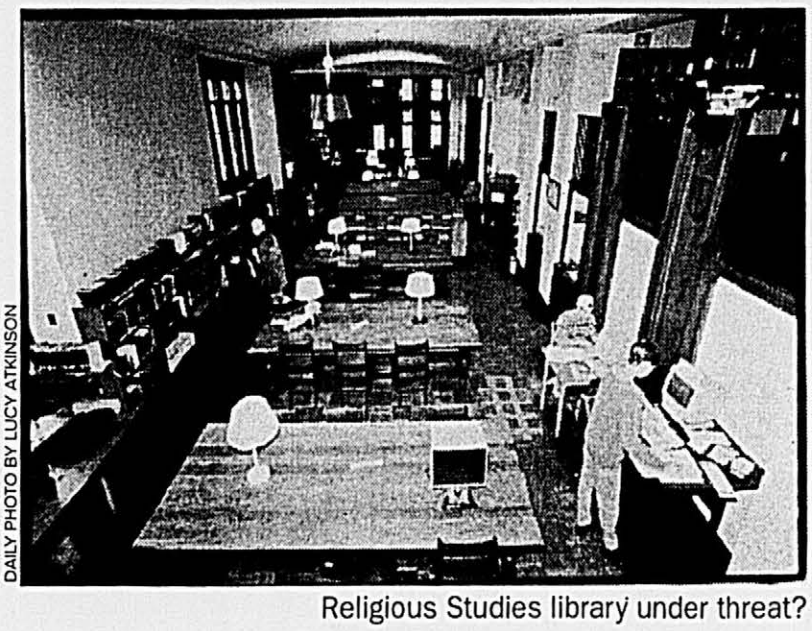
The McGill Daily

Beware knaves and tyrants since 1911

Faculty of Religious Studies under threat

And still waiting for an explanation

by Susannah Schmidt



DAILY PHOTO BY LUCY ATKINSON

Religious Studies library under threat?

In keeping with Shapiro's vision for a "trimmer" McGill, administrators have been quietly planning to amalgamate the Faculty of Religious Studies into the Faculty of Arts.

Late last fall, Religious Studies professors met with VP Academic Bill Chan to discuss the future of the faculty. But professors and students are still awaiting an explanation for the administration's decision to restructure their faculty.

"The administration has acknowledged that the issue is not money," noted Professor Kathleen Skerrett in an interview.

"They know that we are one of the most efficient units in the university. Between 1989 and 1995, Religious Studies generated for McGill a surplus of revenue over expenditure of more than 4.6 million dollars," explained Skerrett.

STATUS QUO NOT VIABLE

In his document Towards a New McGill, Shapiro advocated that the university retain "more or less the same structure as present but forcefully pursu[e] a strategy of retaining only the highest performing faculties." He did not clarify what this meant.

Skerrett is confident that Religious Studies measures up to any criteria which could be put forth by the administration.

"If the administration believes our status quo [is] no longer viable, they should explain their reasoning," stated Skerrett, adding that this reasoning should be based on some "publicly defensible criteria, for example, efficiency, teaching effectiveness, [including] impact of research and public relevance."

Skerrett insisted that "the evidence supports us, that on these criteria, the status quo works very well. On what grounds does the Administration think otherwise?"

Students are asking the same questions. "A lot of students come to McGill and are disenchanted with the education they are getting," noted Jen Nicholson, B.A. representative to Religious Studies.

"But if you talk to students in Religious Studies, they are optimistic about learning and the university.... Students go into the faculty [of Religious Studies] because it is not just about your GPA but a community environment where education is valued," she said.

"The study of religious traditions in a pluralistic, democratic society is a crucial service," said Skerrett.

Both Skerrett and Donna Runnalls, Dean of Religious Studies emphasised the importance of the opportunity for cross-cultural study within the faculty.

"Because [we] have that sense of community," noted Runnalls, "there's discourse going on across the various segmented disciplines of religious studies."

As Skerrett pointed out, it does not seem that any benefits for students could come about if the faculty were to be amalgamated.

The faculty already offers B.A., M.A. , and PhD. programmes, as well as theological programmes which form the academic component of training for Protestant ministers and other graduate studies in theology.

As Skerrett indicated, all Arts courses in Religious Studies, which comprise those of the B.A. programme, are already cleared by the Faculty of Arts Planning Committee, and all the grades go through the usual Arts channels.

However, these courses have only become available to the university since the creation of the faculty in co-operation with the Joint Board of Theological Colleges in 1948.

Currently, the department offers courses in a diversity of world traditions with the majority being on various aspects of Christianity.

As Runnalls pointed out, there are "only three major universities in the anglophone sector in Canada which have substantial programmes in religious studies." Runalls also emphasised the necessity of the theological programme, which is integral to the faculty's endowment.

PhD. student Erin Runions stated that "it's disgusting that they want to close the faculty, especially without any clear reasoning.... It demonstrates an impoverished view of education."

UNILATERAL DECISION-MAKING

Runions also expressed frustration with the administration's handling of the situation, as it unilaterally made

Continued on page 10

Illegal activism?

Friends of the Lubicon lose court case

by Meg Murphy

TORONTO (CUP) — A precedent-setting Ontario Court decision has ruled consumer boycotts illegal.

The Friends of the Lubicon, a grassroots group that supports the Lubicon Cree land rights, was sued the Japanese multinational Daishowa Inc. Daishowa claims the Friends' boycott of Daishowa products has unfairly cost the company over $3 million in lost business.

The Ontario divisional court ruled the Friends boycott illegal because the purpose of the picketing was to induce Daishowa customers to cease doing business with the B.C. based logging company, according to Wristen.

But the boycott was not organised in a blind desire to cause economic harm to a corporation, says Steven Kenda, a spokesperson for the Friends of the Lubicon.

"The boycott was our means of protesting the clearcutting of Lubicon land before land right issues are settled," he said.

But according to Tom Cochran, director of corporate development at Daishowa Forest Products, the Friends have no right to harm business by informing Daishowa customers about the company's clearcutting activities.

"If they have a complaint against the company, fine. You can come after us but do not go after our customers," said Cochran.

Cochran adds that Daishowa has stopped clear cutting activities in order to show "good will."

But Kevin Thomas, a spokesperson for the Friends of the Lubicon, says Daishowa has stopped logging due to the consumer boycott.

"The boycott stopped logging for four years and I think that is why we are in court," said Thomas.

The boycott was part of a broad based movement to support the Lubicon, a Plains Cree First Nation in Northern Alberta.

Since the end of the Second World War, the Lubicon Cree have been involved in a lengthy dispute with the provincial and federal governments in an attempt to have their land rights recognised.

The Lubicon never signed a treaty, yet their resource rich land has been under continual threat from logging and oil companies.

In the late nineteen eighties, the Lubicon blockaded logging roads leading into their traditional territories.

BOYCOTTS ON THE RISE?

Law suits involving large corporations suing activists for causing undue economic damage have become popular in the last five years, according to Karen Wristen, lawyer for the Friends of the Lubicon.

She says these law suits are less about economic reprisal then the desire to silence opposition.

This is a SLAPP suit (Strategic Law Suit Against Public Participation) designed to squash public dissent against corporate behaviour, says Wristen.

For the past 20 years in the United States, corporations have been bringing forward

Continued on page 10

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Faculties of Arts and of Science

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Kiosques d'information sur les programmes d'études avancées
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Mardi 13 février : *Journée des sciences humaines*
Mercredi 14 février : *Journée des arts, lettres et communications*
Jeudi 15 février : *Journée des sciences de la gestion*

Conférences grand public
Lundi 12 février, salle Marie-Gérin-Lajoie • Pavillon Judith-Jasmin, local J-M400

12 h : **Cancer : les causes et le traitement**
D[r] Richard Béliveau, professeur de biochimie
Dir. du laboratoire d'oncologie moléculaire, UQAM

12 h 45 : **Les énergies de l'an 2000 au service de la société : problèmes et solutions**
D[r] Benoit Marsan, professeur de chimie
Dir. du laboratoire d'électrochimie fondamentale et appliquée, UQAM

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FEBRUARY 12 TO 16, 1996
9:30 AM TO 4:30 PM

Please take this opportunity to check your entire McGill record and make any corrections. Return forms to your Student Affairs Office ONLY if you are making changes or if you are a U3 student "expecting to graduate" this year.

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Deadline Reminder: SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1996 to withdraw from "B" courses in the winter via MARS with NO REFUND.

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since 1911
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Editorial Offices:
3480 McTavish St., Montréal, Qc.,
room B-03, H3A 1X9

Business & Advertising Office:
3480 McTavish St., Montréal, Qc.,
room B-07, H3A 1X9

editorial: (514) 398-6784
business/advertising: (514) 398-6790
fax: (514) 398-8318

business manager: Marian Schrier
assistant business manager:
Jo-Anne Pickel
advertising managers:
Boris Shedov, Letty Matteo
advertising layout & design:
Mark Brooker

contributors:
Jef Chippewa, Alex Greunenfelder, David Hymans, Maura Jetté , Melissa Radler, Susannah Schmidt, Erinrose Sullivan and Sonia Verma

Co-ordinating Editor: M-J Milloy
Co-ordinating News Editor: Robin Perelle
News Editors: Anup Grewal, Zachary Schwartz
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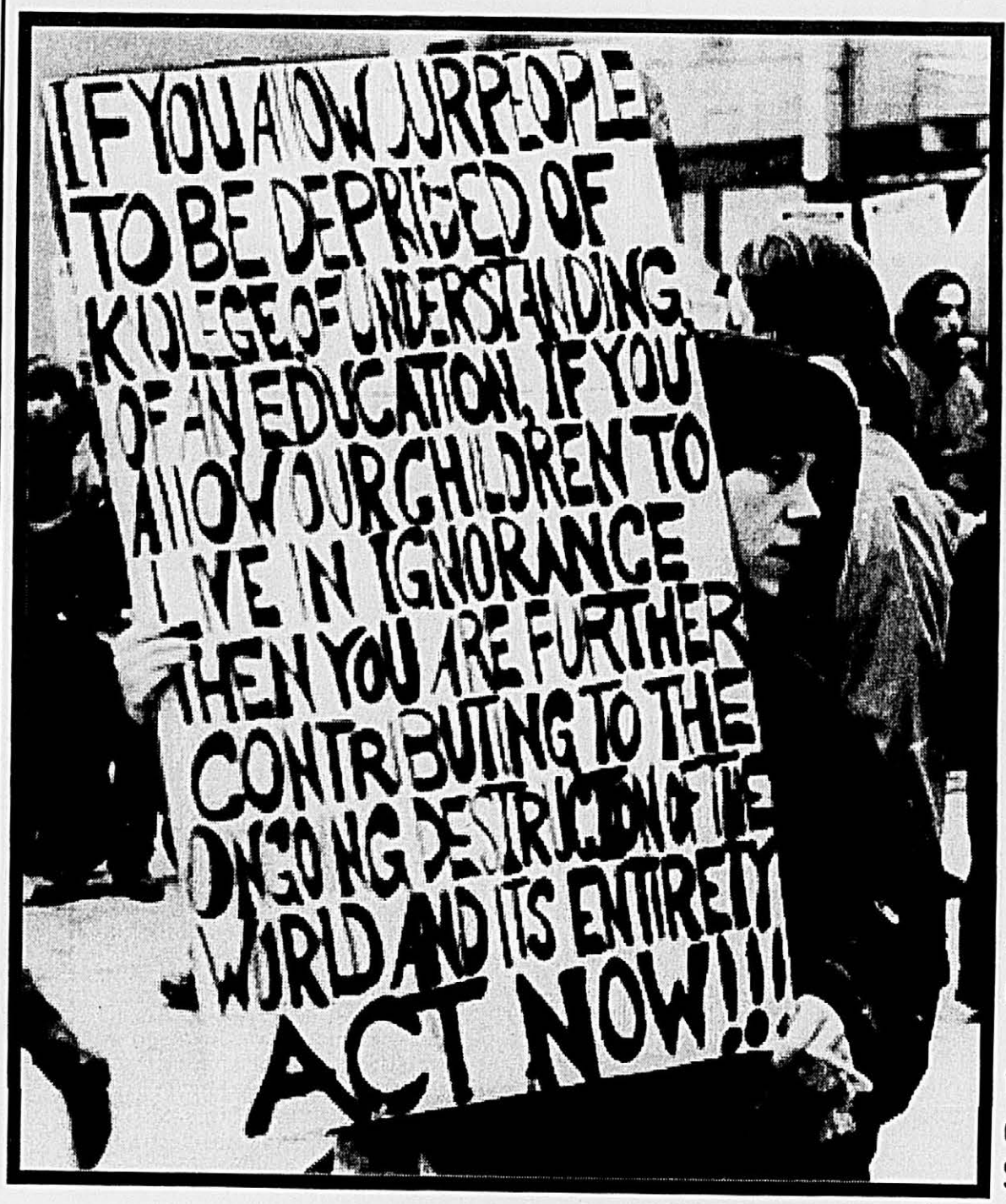

DAILY PHOTO BY MIKE CULLEN

All Daily staff are hereby duly informed that the prestigious and desirable position of culture editor is hereby wide open.

Persons interested in running can drop their nominations off at the Daily office.

Culture vultures of the world unite. You have nothing to lose but your spare time (and dignity).

For more information, come down to Shatner B-03 or call 398-6784.

letters

The ones at the bottom feel unwanted

To the Daily:

In a paper which prides itself in environmental responsibility, I have but one gripe. It is the hundreds of copies of the Daily which I see, every day, laying in piles all over campus. In the Adams' Auditorium alone, I counted over 500 copies of the Daily Culture from last week!

After a while, I guess (hope!) that these stacks of wood fibre get taken to be recycled, but I wonder why an audit couldn't be conducted to see just how many copies of your fine journals really need to be printed?

I've heard that this overproduction is strictly so that the Daily can claim a misleading circulation of 11 000 copies. Still, it is not my place to question your motives.

Certainly, it would be a tragedy if someone desiring a paper did not have easy access to a nearby heap. In fact, having only a few copies left would still be a deterrent to consumption; people would have to bend down so low to pick one up! I know that would stop me from grabbing one on my way out the door.

I simply think that a more realistic and perhaps efficient circulation is in order. Perhaps a redistribution of the copies would suffice to solve the problem.

Maybe you need to reduce production. Either way, it pains me to pick up a copy of the Daily to read and then to put it back a few hours later onto a stack of hundreds more; the rejects in the bottom half of the pile are surely doomed to be excluded from absorption by our keen, bright eyes.

Simon Thornington
U3 BSc. (Computer Science)

The Tribune making up its letters?

To the Tribune

cc: The McGill Daily

The January 10 issue of the McGill Tribune contained a letter to the editor signed by Dean Castronovo, U2 Engineering ("Labour Union Rights")

The January 23 issue of the Tribune contained a letter to the editor signed by Dick Vegas, U3 Arts ("Against Life Insurance").

Both of these letters were written by Tribune editors. Both were signed using the pen names of other editors and writing staff members without their consent.

The Dick Vegas letter contained incorrect and potentially libelous information, and was written by Editor-in-chief Sylvie Babarik herself.

Why are Tribune editors manipulating the content of a section devoted to reader feedback and opinion?

Is this considered sound journalistic practice? Should they not be using the editorial section of the newspaper for opinions like the "Against Life Insurance" letter?

The readership has a right to know.

Jack Sullivan
U3 History

To the Daily,

Having myself received a copy of Mr. Sullivan's letter, I thought it best that I account for my actions immediately.

Though I have presented many people with a lengthy description of how I came to write the letter signed Dick Vegas, I could not then, nor can I now presume to have any excuse for my actions. I can only offer my most sincere apology.

I wrote that letter the day the paper was to go to print because we had not received enough submissions to fill the space. This was a rash and unforgivable action. Moreover, the information I included was false and I failed to verify it — something which should have been second nature for me.

Beyond these wrongs, as Mr. Sullivan justly pointed out, I jeopardized the legitimacy of a section reserved for non-Tribune student opinion. For this too I am deeply sorry.

As for the letter signed Dean Castronovo, I do not feel sufficiently informed to comment on behalf of its author.

To the best of my knowledge, these are the first two cases in which we filled space with made-up letters. I would like to assure readers that we will not engage in this practice again. This is a very important space and I am deeply sorry that I lost track of this obvious fact.

Sylvie Babarik
Editor-in-chief of the Tribune

Attention Richard Beaulieu:

Can you please come to the Daily office to shorten your letter. It is over 300 words.

F.R. Scott's Constitution

A lecture by

Professor Roderick Macdonald

F.R. Scott Professor of
Constitutional and Public Law
Faculty of Law, McGill University

To Inaugurate the F.R. Scott Chair in Constitutional and Public Law

Friday, 16 February, 1996
18h30

Moot Court Room, Faculty of Law
Chancellor Day Hall, 3644 Peel Street

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

David Thomson Award for Excellence in Graduate Supervision and Teaching

The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research is pleased to invite nominations for the David Thomson Award for Excellence in Graduate Supervision and Teaching. The third annual Award will be presented at the Spring 1996 Convocation.

To be eligible, a professor must have taught at the graduate level at McGill for a minimum of three years and must be currently involved in graduate student training. Professors should be nominated for their excellence in supervision and teaching of graduate students. Coordination of graduate programs will also be taken into account.

Nominations should include:

- letters of support from at least one faculty member and between three and six current or former graduate students;
- the curriculum vitae of the nominee, including a list of all students supervised to degree (with start and completion dates and-where possible-an indication of the graduate's present position); and
- a completed nomination form.

Note: Files submitted in 1995 will be re-entered for 1996, upon request.

Nomination forms and more information can be obtained from the Office of the Dean of Graduate Studies, Room 308, Dawson Hall (phone: 3991, fax: 8257).
DEADLINE FOR NOMINATIONS: FRIDAY, MARCH 8

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Skip your classes this week

Frustration and despair is often our common resort in the face of large and potentially overwhelming issues: massive social spending cuts while corporations avoid paying taxes; the weakening of environmental protection legislation while dead St. Lawrence whales are classified as toxic waste; even McGill's continued refusal to protect minority rights on campus.

We live in a society where power is becoming increasingly concentrated, where we tend to have little control over the elite that makes the economic and political decisions that affect our lives. While a lot of us do see active participation in the social problems that surround us as our civic responsibility, we often doubt our ability to affect any real or constructive change.

As McGill students, however, we do enjoy enormous privilege and power. In our university environment, we have the tools and the resources at our disposal to research numerous issues. Most importantly, we can take the time to learn how to apply these tools most effectively. Effective activism - researching and lobbying - isn't all that difficult, but it does require skills that need to be learned.

It is with this in mind that QPIRG, SSMU and PGSS have planned "McGill Activism Week" which kicks off today in the Shatner Ballroom. Throughout the week there will be workshops given by experienced community activists designed to teach us the skills that we need to act: how to change campus policies, how to get involved in municipal, provincial and federal politics, how to use the Internet for campaigning, how to gain access to local media, etc. On top of this, McGill activist groups are organizing their own lectures and discussions on social and environmental issues that need desperate attention now. So skip a class or two this week and come out and see how you can make a change.

Hyde Park submitted by McGill Activism Week Committee

Workshops for activism week

Breaking Bureaucracy and Mobilizing McGIll
Monday February 12,
3-5 PM. Shatner B09/B10

Accessing Montreal's Media
Tuesday February 13,
12-2pm. Shatner B09/B10

Feminist Organizing on Campus
Tuesday, February 13,
3-5pm. Shatner B09/B10

Campaigning through the Internet
Wednesday, February 14,
12-1pm. Leacock teaching lab

Lobbying City Hall
Wednesday, February 14,
3-5pm. Shatner 107/108

Impact of Quebec/Canadian Student Activism
Thursday, February 15,
12-2pm. Shatner 107/108

Unlearning Oppression
Thursday, February 15,
2-5pm. CKUT office, 3647 University St.

Union Organizing
Thursday, February 15,
3-5pm. Shatner 107/108

Informal get-together fro McGill Activist Groups on Taking Collective Action

PGSS

PGSS ELECTIONS

The nomination period for Executive (President, V.P. External, V.P. Internal, V.P. Finance, V.P. Administration, V.P. University Affairs), Senate, and Board of Governors positions is extended until:

Thursday, February 15, 5 P.M.

Nomination forms are available at Thomson House 3650 McTavish. Info: Gilbert Cabana, CRO (398-4096)

NOT A BUNCH OF HOOLIGANS

Mainstream media tries to discredit National Day of Action

by M-J Milloy

Students used their voices and their feet on Wednesday's day of action to protest cuts to social and educational funding.

In large urban centres and small cities across Canada, students engaged in a variety of actions to protest the government's continuing assault on the social and educational fabric of the country.

Although a severe blizzard cancelled the day of action in Newfoundland, a group of fifteen students staged a six hour sit-in in the offices of Brian Tobin, the province's new premier.

The students demanded assurances from the former federal fisheries minister that current levels of social and educational spending would be maintained.

During his tenure as an opposition backbencher, Tobin was renowned as a member of the 'rat pack', a group of unruly M.P.s who bitterly denounced the educational cuts of former Prime Minister Mulroney.

Since assuming a cabinet post in the current Liberal government, Tobin has helped preside over spending cuts that far outstrip Mulroney's.

After being sworn in last week, students at the sit-in wanted Tobin to live up to his earlier ideals as a backbencher.

After a six-hour wait, Tobin held a short meeting with six students.

Students in Toronto also held a sit-in as a part of the National Day of Action, although they never got to see the face of the premier, only the shields of riot police.

A group of Toronto university and high-school students forced their way past police barricades and into the provincial legislature, where they held a sit-in before being ejected by police.

Although the action was spontaneous, the sit-in at Queen's Park carried a powerful message to the provincial government, which recently announced a 20 per cent raise in tuition levels for next year.

"They are trying to lock us out of education. They are trying to lock us out of Queen's park. This is a symbolic gesture," said Shaun Sanderson, a student from York University.

The rally at Queen's Park was part of the Pan-Canadian Day of Action organised by the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS). Over 2 000 students massed in front of the legislature building in the heart of Toronto, behind large steel fences erected by the provincial police last fall.

Protestors quickly breached the front gates, and gathered at the doors, chanting "this is our house, let us in." When they breached the heavy oak doors of the legislature, students occupied the lobby before they were dispersed by the police.

Police charged four students with various offences including 'intimidating a provincial legislature,' an obscure law that has never been used in its 100 year life on provincial statute books.

True to form, many media outlets attempted to dismiss the political demands of the protestors by drawing attention to their radical action.

Although the Toronto Sun called the students "vandals" in a front page headline, other students were adamant that their actions were motivated by principles, and not hooliganism.

"I think it just shows that students are angry and they are going to [get angrier]," said Terry Buckland an executive of a Toronto university students' union.

Buckland does not believe that all of the public will dismiss the action as the result of a group of trouble-makers.

"A lot [of people] realise that these are their daughters and sons and a lot don't think their children are hooligans."

Despite the media portrayal of lawless vandals in Toronto, the relationship between low corporate taxation levels and the deterioration in social spending was the chief message to emerge from the march in Vancouver.

"Cutting social programmes is not acceptable," said Michael Gardiner, chair of B.C.'s arm of CFS.

"We will make it very clear that there are alternatives which do not compromise the future of the country."

Over 7 000 protesters marched in an eight block procession from the downtown public library to the Vancouver Art Gallery.

Unlike the Montréal demonstration, the B.C. marchers led their banners and chants straight through the heart of the city's business community. As Vancouver's business community rides a growing wave of economic prosperity, students raised their voices to protect social and educational programmes.

With files from The Varsity, the University of Toronto; The Muse, Memorial University of Newfoundland; The Ubyssey, University of British Columbia.

DAILY PHOTO BY MIKE CULLEN

WORLD WATCH

1. Money to battered women's shelters, not to O.J.

As O.J. Simpson continues his media blitz to tell 'his side' of the story, a Massachusetts coalition of battered women's groups is urging consumers to send O.J. their own message.

"The coalition is asking people to donate $29.95, the cost of O.J.'s new video, to a battered women's shelter," said Barbara Wandeis, executive director of the Rose Fund, which is part of the coalition.

Last week, Simpson broke his post-trial media silence to claim his innocence and pitch his upcoming videotape, in which he will reportedly offer his explanation for the murders of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman.

"We have received many phone calls from people who have expressed their concern and outrage that this video will profit a batterer who has never been held accountable for the abuse of Nicole Brown Simpson," said Wandeis.

Donating the cost of the video to a woman's shelter is one way to constructively channel that outrage, according to Wandeis.

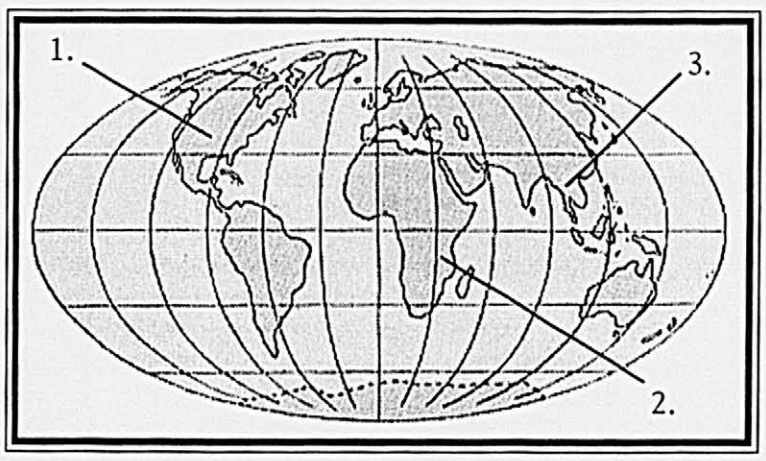
"We're trying to make this a positive step. Shelters are in need of money and they don't always have enough resources to be able to care for women," she said.

The donation is not only a symbolic act, but will make a visible contribution to the fund's efforts to eliminate violence against women. $29.95 will supply 50 information brochures for women in abusive situations, subsidise one rape prevention education session in a local high school or purchase enough diapers for an infant in a women's shelter for one week.

The purchase price will also buy one teen-dating violence prevention video for a local high school.

2. Trade unions in Malawi oppose structural adjustments

Union leaders in Malawi are preparing for actions to save almost 21 000 civil service jobs that are being threatened by government cutbacks.



Ken Williams Mhango, the head of the Malawi Congress of Trade Unions, urged trade unions to organise for the expected layoffs in March.

Following a series of strikes by civil servants to protest poor wage and working conditions, 10 000 temporary workers were immediately layed-off.

Now, as the government nears the completion of a survey of all civil service positions, Mhango fears that a further 21 000 workers may lose their jobs.

The reduction in the size of the civil service is a key aspect of the Structural Adjustment Programme imposed on Malawi by the International Monetary Fund.

3. An eye for an eye?

On January 28, a firing squad killed Prommas Leamsai in the Bangkwang Maximum Security Prison in Bangkok.

The execution, which was done under great secrecy, is now being used by the Ministry of the Interior as an "example" to other criminals.

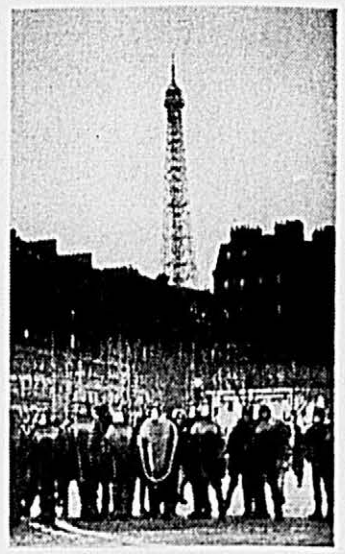
Amnesty International called the execution "a worrying development" for it may reflect a shift in policy at the highest levels of the Thai government.

Thailand has not used the death penalty since 1987, which had been an encouraging development in a region where the use of the death penalty is on the rise.

This apparent reversal of policy may bode ill for the more than 100 people currently waiting on death row in Thailand. This may especially be the case considering the same Interior Minister, Banharn Silapa-archa, who ordered the execution of Prommas, is also the current Prime Minister of the country.

STRIKING FOR SOCIAL SAFETY

Students and workers were marching together in solidarity, side by side, choking the streets of Paris. The city was paralysed. Waving hand-painted placards, they passed a prison. The inmates saluted the crowd, lighting papers on fire and waving through the bars. The people applauded them. The police couldn't stop the protesters. They were unstoppable.



From the streets of Paris

by Sonia Verma

When Carlos Cornejo, a Montréal student, spoke about the French display of social solidarity, he could have been describing a famous Paris scene from May 29, 1968. It was then that a massive student-worker upheaval nearly toppled France as protests crippled the nation. A panicked President Charles de Gaulle was compelled to call a snap election as the intensity of public discord reached a crescendo.

But Cornejo wasn't talking about these Paris street protests of the 60s. He was describing the volatile situation in Paris just a few months ago.

Cornejo traveled to France in December as a member of The Young Socialists in the midst of the most debilitating public-sector strike The Fifth Republic has experienced since the uprising of 1968.

Angered by Prime Minister Alain Juppé's November 15 announcement of sweeping budgetary reforms to harness France's $86 billion dollar deficit, workers retaliated in the time-honoured tradition of taking to the streets.

> "What's been happening in France isn't just labour strikes. The strikes are the beginning which precede the struggle."
> — Carlos Cornejo, Montréal student activist

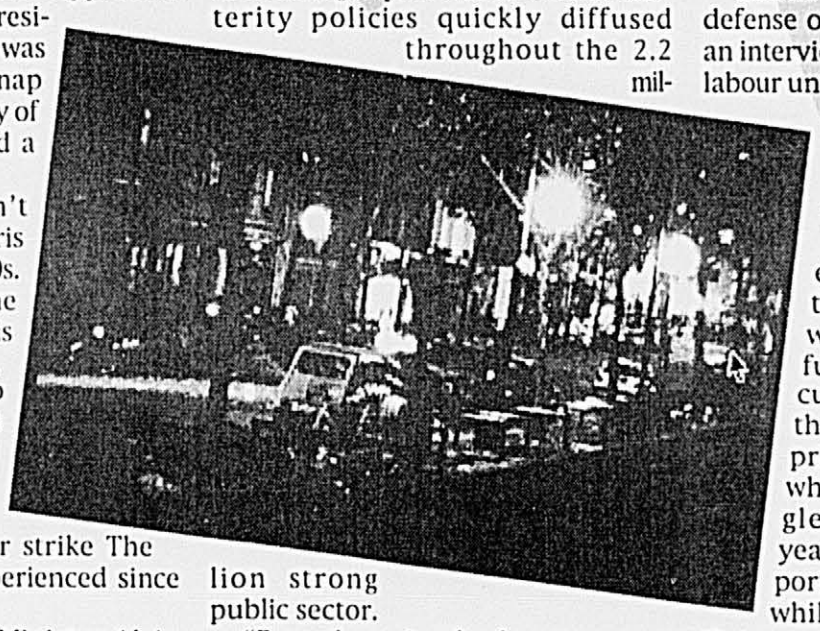
The "Juppé Plan" prescribed dramatic cuts to the nation's system of social security payments, calling for strict spending guidelines, new taxes and a consolidation of the publicly-financed medical plans into a single national system. Public-sector employees were told to relinquish former entitlements such as lifetime job security, six week vacations and universal health care.

Taken in its entirety, the Juppé Plan was intended to target the 'privileges' of the public sector. "We must carry out these reforms now and carry them out together," Juppé urged.

Public sector workers, however, were not willing to simply acquiesce to the government's offensive assault on social security.

PARIS PARALYSED

During the final week of November rail workers joined students already on strike, demanding an increase in the national budget for education. Worker frustration with the Juppé Plan and President Jacques Chirac's harsh austerity policies quickly diffused throughout the 2.2 million strong public sector.



"Even the union leaders were surprised at how the strikes snowballed," TV talk-show host and former student activist Michel Field told *Maclean's* in December.

The strikers shared a pervasive sense of betrayal over Chirac's undelivered campaign assurances of job-creation. The administration came into power on a pledge of making unemployment its "priority of priorities," but then reneged on its promises, prompting public outcry.

Mail went unsorted, trains and subways stood still, power blackouts plagued the country and hospitals went without doctors. Correspondingly, the French government's popularity plunged into free fall and the stock market tumbled.

After three weeks of slowing the country to a virtual crawl, the wave of civil protest culminated on December 12.

Cornejo, who flew to Paris from Montréal, joined the over 2 million people who flooded city streets across France. Contrary to government expectations, public support for the workers' cause swelled to 62 per cent — despite a frozen transit system and logistical chaos in the absence of public services.

Meanwhile, French officials squirmed.

"The welfare reforms are a single package," insisted Alain Lamassoure, the government's spokesman. "If any one of its elements is called into question," he warned, "the whole package will collapse." Quickly following suit, Juppé addressed the deadlocked nation, asserting, "France has to choose between change and decline."

Chirac echoed this rhetoric in his defense of budgetary reforms during an interview with *Time* magazine: "The labour unions and professional organisations have a lot of trouble understanding that there are necessary evolutions."

But many of the protesters understood the nature of the proposed cutbacks all too well. Workers steadfastly refused to forfeit the social security benefits threatened by the Juppé Plan. "These are not privileges.... They are benefits, which we won through struggle after struggle over the years," one railway striker reported to *Maclean's* magazine while marching through Paris. "It is our identity. It is what makes us France."

NOT OVER TILL IT'S OVER

The French general strikes occurred two months ago. Today, an official speaking from the French Consulate in Montréal curtly reports that the massive civil unrest has been "dealt with effectively." Indeed, France appears to be on its feet again. On January 1, the majority of protesters returned to work, with union leaders declaring the labour campaign victorious.

In a seeming political about-face, the French government granted several concessions intended to placate railway workers, who had formed the backbone of the December protest movement. The settlement plan included an abandonment of the government's plan to revamp the heavily subsidised railways, an indefinite delay of plans to overhaul the tax system and an infusion of money into the country's under-financed universities.

The French administration, however, admits that the essence of the Juppé Plan remains intact, resting on a crux of planned reforms which would radically transform health care in France. Unpopular new welfare charges also remain unscathed while, according to *The Economist*, unemployment is expected to rise from 11.5 per cent to 12 per cent by the summer.

Although the French administration would appear to believe the political nightmare of a nation-wide public sector strike is a thing of the past, others maintain that the struggle is only beginning. Moreover, the settlement reached between union leaders and French officials did not necessarily satisfy the rank and file union members.

"There is widespread bitterness among militant workers, who talk of going back on strike against the government's attacks," reads the latest issue of *Spartacist Canada*, a worker advocacy newsletter.

Richard De Thyre of l'Association pour l'emploi, l'information et la solidarité des chômeurs et des travailleurs précaires (APEIS), a French labour organisation, agrees. "The movement is not over, it does not come

Demonstrations took place all over France during December. Photos courtesy of Université de Paris VIII.

to the streets of Canada

to an abrupt halt as the government would like to believe," says De Thyre.

Cornejo echoes this sentiment. "What's been happening in France isn't just labour strikes. The strikes are the beginning which precede the struggle," he says.

Since the underlying economic policies which precipitated the strikes remain basically intact, as does the deficit-slashing mentality of the government, renewed social upheaval is a very real prospect.

EUROPEAN UNION IMPOSES AUSTERITY POLICIES

Both Juppé and Chirac justify the necessity of economic reforms by claiming the importance of getting France's fiscal house in order. But the proposed cutbacks reveal a deeper mandate, one which extends beyond French borders and affects the entire European Community as it faces a prolonged era of austerity.

The motivation behind France's economic "restructuring" stems from The Maastricht treaty — the heart of the European Union — which looms over the fiscal consciences of the 15 countries who signed it four years ago. The treaty hinges on a controversial economic and monetary union (EMU) which would merge the countries' currencies into a single 'Euro-currency' by 1999.

The treaty is contingent upon tough economic criteria each country must fulfill. Nations are obliged to reduce their deficit to three per cent of their Gross Domestic Product. France's current budget shortfall presently hovers above five per cent. This aspect of the treaty is designed to eliminate the economic disparities among the countries and provide a stable currency for international markets.

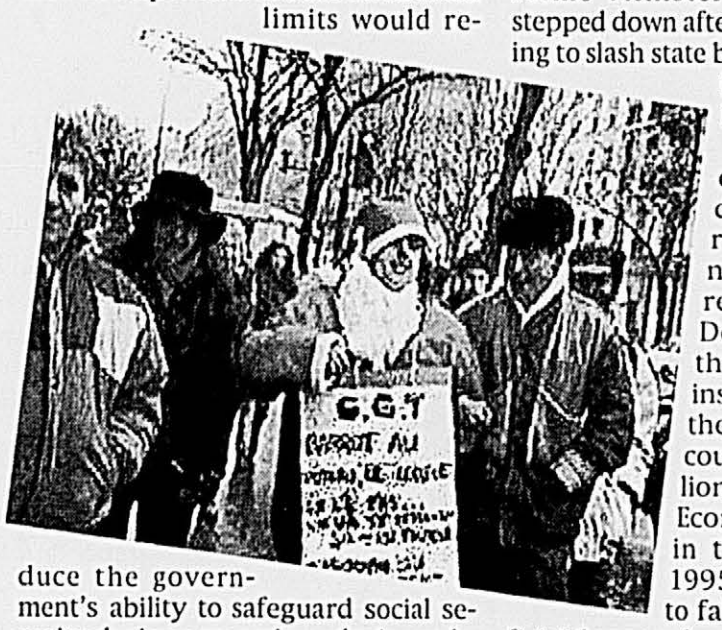
In France, however, the Maastricht treaty has amounted to a dangerous race against time. The Chirac administration is scrambling to meet the economic deadline at a price which is evidently too high for a significant proportion of the population. The fear is that the country's social welfare system may be jeopardised.

France's December labour strikes may reflect a growing European doubt of the merits of the EMU.

"What is really at stake here is the social safety net. Social programmes are being harmonized at the lowest common denominator," says De Thyre. De Thyre and other labour activists question the viability of an economic union being imposed on the French people in the face of public protest.

He reasons that a monetary union with a single currency would further exacerbate unemployment, forcing "uncompetitive" workers to accept lower wages in order to remain employable, or else lose their jobs.

"Other aspects of the treaty, which essentially commit the countries involved to operate with a balanced budget are simply unrealistic," adds Nick Bakker, a Canadian labour activist. The imposition of such strict fiscal limits would reduce the government's ability to safeguard social security during a recession, placing public sector jobs at greater risk.



Juppé and his colleagues, however, counter that meeting the criteria will start a "virtuous cycle." According to *The Economist*, lower deficits will mean lower interest rates which will mean more investment, more jobs and more tax revenue to lower the deficit — and pay off the accumulated debt.

But in the short term, even the government concedes that lower deficits will only be achieved by raising taxes or reducing public spending, which will mean fewer jobs, a declining standard of social security and, perhaps inevitably, more public opposition.

> "France has given the Western World a sense of just how much turmoil can ensue with the kind of budget cutting that governments are trying to get away with"
> — Richard De Thyre, French workers' advocacy group APEIS

Chirac stubbornly maintains that "the criteria are what they are.... They simply express the need to act like responsible and serious people. So as far as I am concerned, I am not inclined to change anything at all."

Bakker, however, challenges Chirac's notion of responsible government, commenting that "Chirac's twisted concept of democracy is to act with stubborn arrogance pushing these reforms through against the people's will." Bakker points out that there is a counter cost of continuing with the proposed budget cutbacks and risking further labour strikes.

Politically, that cost could prove to be very high. France's present right-wing government must call an election by 1998 and, given the dismal popularity polls, Chirac cannot afford to be overconfident in implementing objectionable economic policy.

Caught in a similar budgetary dilemma, the Austrian government recently fell when the ruling coalition could not come to a consensus on how to slash the nation's deficit. Last August, Sweden's Social Democratic Prime Minister Ingvar Carisson stepped down after unsuccessfully trying to slash state budgets. "Chirac may be next" forecasts Bakker.

The practical cost of lost production during industrial unrest cannot be ignored. According to a report published on December 19, Insée, the national statistics institute, estimates that the strikes will cost the country up to $1.6 billion in lost production. Economic growth idled in the last quarter of 1995 and is anticipated to fall well below the official forecast for 1996.

This will make it even more difficult for the French government to meet the Maastricht criteria and casts yet more doubt on France's ability to qualify for the EMU itself.

FOLLOWING THE FRENCH WAVE

For now, the French government, having weathered the storm of massive civil unrest, is breathing a temporary sigh of relief. But rather than signifying an end to debate, the uneasy agreement reached between unions and the French administration may become a starting point for renewed conflict. According to *La Monde Diplomatique*, the recent events in France were "the first revolt against globalisation."

"France has given the Western World a sense of just how much turmoil can ensue with the kind of budget cutting that governments are trying to get away with," comments De Thyre.

French strikes have provided an unanticipated spin-off, inspiring workers worldwide. Several labour and social welfare organisations recently converged in Montréal to take part in a "Fightback" conference to create a common campaign against deficit-slashing government policies occurring in Ontario and across Canada. According to delegates, a concerted effort is seen as instrumental in combating an international restructuring process that marginalises labour concerns.

The conference, which was co-sponsored by the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP) and the Regroupement des chômeuses et chômeurs du Quebec (RCCQ), took place January 19 and 20. Organiser Richard St. Pierre urged over 400 participants "to be in tune with the times, [because] especially at the end of this century, we need a global approach."

Echoing the French labour campaign, several of the delegates waved placards calling for a "General Strike against the Harris Cuts." Others wore buttons which read, "Students and Workers Unite — General Strike."

John Clarke of OCAP maintains that the labour unrest recently witnessed in France has already sent shock waves across Canada.

Last November, 120 low-paid laundry workers at one of Calgary's hospitals went on a wildcat strike to protest expected job losses due to its announced privatisation. The workers were joined by 25 000 support workers from 12 other Calgary hospitals and nursing homes. The protest came in response to Alberta Premier Ralph Klein's plan to slash $600 million from health care spending within two years. After the strikes, Klein backed down on half of his announced cuts.

> "If we are to hold the line or win concessions in the present period... we must disrupt the political life of governments and economic life of corporations that create conditions of crisis."
> — John Clarke, Ontario Coalition Against Poverty.

On December 11 in London, Ontario, 15 000 workers protested public sector cuts sought by the Conservative government which include a 22 per cent cut in the welfare checks of the unemployed. Transportation was halted, most public services were interrupted and several manufacturing sector plants including Ford, GM, Kellogg's and Labatts stopped production.

"The Ontario government lost billions of dollars in lost tax revenues. The strike was a turning point in our common struggle against the corporate agenda," said a delegate from London who had participated in the city-wide shutdown.

A second strike, following the London protest, is currently being planned for February 23 and 24.

And last week in cities across Canada, students protested in a Pan-Canada day of action against the series of cuts to social spending, including those which will effect the cost of education.

"If we are to hold the line or win concessions in the present period... we must disrupt the political life of governments and economic life of corporations that create conditions of crisis," maintains Clarke. In this sense, the French strikes have provided a template for labour movements worldwide.

For Carlos Cornejo, the young labour activist, "the French workers are an example of what we should strive for. Social issues are on the agenda.... The movement is not over."

- with files from Anup Grewal

WHEN CANADA LABELS YOU A THREAT... *DEPORTATION PROCESS CALLED 'DEPLORABLE'*

by Anup Grewal

Being tagged as a "National Security Risk" was probably the last thing on Wahid Baroud's mind when he first came to Canada in 1991.

Yet, in the span of four years, Immigration Canada investigated, harassed and finally put Baroud in jail, for his past membership in the Palestinian Liberation Organisation.

On December 19, Baroud was escorted onto a plane headed for Sudan, the final act in a process some are calling dehumanising and deplorable on the part of Immigration Canada.

"[Baroud's case] was carried out in a manner which is characteristic of despotic governments," comments Ehad Al-Iweiwi of the Canadian Arab Foundation (CAF).

The CAF has filed a formal complaint with Immigration Canada and is preparing, along with Baroud's lawyer, Kevin MacTavish of Jackman and Associates in Toronto, a lawsuit against the unconstitutionality of certain parts of the Immigration Act.

> "The RCMP just showed up at [Baroud's] home and arrested him in front of his children; they just dragged him off," — Kevin MacTavish, lawyer for Wahid Baroud.

A NOT SO WARM WELCOME

Baroud arrived in Toronto in May 1991, seeking refugee status for himself, his wife and his children.

Although he was instantly detained and questioned by Canadian intelligence authorities for 41 days, he was eventually released because there were no grounds for further detention.

Over the next two years, Baroud made regular visits to an immigration department office in the Toronto vicinity.

But three years later, in June 1994, "the RCMP just showed up at [Baroud's] home and arrested him in front of his children; they just dragged him off," describes MacTavish.

Even though Baroud had been in regular contact with Immigration Canada, he was not forewarned of his impending arrest. This was the beginning of a chain of events in which Baroud was kept uninformed of his case — and unprotected by any code of basic rights.

No one is quite sure what occurred between 1991 and 1994 in the offices of Immigration and the Canadian Intelligence Service.

Three years after Baroud's arrival, Immigration Canada issued a Security Certificate against him in accordance with section 40.1 of the Immigration Act, which stipulates such an action if a person is deemed a "National Security Risk."

Baroud then waited, from June 1994 to February 1995, in Toronto's Don Jail, for a ruling by the Federal Court on the validity of the Security Certificate. If the Court upheld the certificate, Baroud knew he would be deported.

Both the CAF and MacTavish condemn the fact that Baroud was neither forewarned of the arrest nor given an opportunity to respond to the allegations against him.

"When a person is a non-resident in Canada, they have no rights to a detention hearing. Mr. Baroud, from June 1994 to October 1995, never appeared before a judge for bail, or to seek the validity of his detention or for *habeus corpus.*," criticises MacTavish.

But according to section 40.1 of the Immigration Act, evidence for the issuance of Security Certificate cannot be disclosed because it may pose a risk to the safety of Canada.

When the ruling finally came, it affirmed that Baroud himself was not a terrorist and posed no risk to security. However, the court decided to uphold the Security Certificate because Baroud had been a former member of an organisation the Canadian government deems terrorist, the PLO.

Baroud was returned to the Don Jail, where he spent his last days in Canada.

"The judge specifically and expressly said that the sole reason Mr. Baroud was detained was because of his past membership in the PLO," MacTavish recalls.

But Al-Iweiwi challenges Canada's continued discrimination against the PLO, and says that membership in the organisation should not be grounds for deportation.

GRAPHIC COURTESY OF THE *ARTHUR*, TRENT UNIVERSITY

FOR THE SAFETY OF THE COUNTRY?

The CAF is condemning not only the ruling, but also the cruel way in which Immigration Canada actually deported Baroud.

When Baroud was ordered onto a plane headed for Sudan, he was still in his prison clothes.

"You know what prison clothes are like — blue coveralls and a blue shirt... — well, that is how they [the security officials] wanted to send Mr. Baroud to a foreign country," says MacTavish.

According to the CAF, this treatment showed a basic disregard for basic humanitarian codes of conduct.

When Baroud refused to get on the plane, Immigration officials called his 14 year old daughter and told her that she had 20 minutes to pack her father's clothes.

This was the only way that Baroud's family found out that he was being deported. In the end, his wife was not even allowed to see him before he left.

According to Richard St Louis at the Montréal branch of Immigration Canada, informing the lawyer or the family of someone who is being deported is not necessary.

"Technically, the deportation order is only issued to the person being deported," he says.

Paul Billings, Immigration Consultant with the Organisation of Professional Immigration Consultants, comments that the handling of Baroud's case "is not inconsistent with the way deportations are carried out [in Canada]. They [the Canadian government] want to do it with the least amount of publicity possible because of security reasons."

"Is it fair?" asks Billings. "Probably not, but it is for the safety of the country."

The CAF and MacTavish disagree. They are contesting section 40.1 on grounds that it violates the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

They have also sent formal complaints to Immigration Canada about the way Baroud was handled.

Billings points out, however, that previous challenges to the Immigration Act on the basis of the Charter have usually not been successful.

This may have to do with Canada's renewed emphasis on discouraging refugee claimants.

Billings says that "benefits have been taken away from refugees in Canada to discourage them from coming to Canada's borders to make claims."

> "Is it fair? Probably not, but it is for the safety of the country." — Paul Billings, Immigration Consultant.

As for refugees with Security Certificates issued against them, the chances of them being granted asylum are even slimmer.

The Canadian Human Rights Commission is not even permitted to review the cases of such individuals.

Billings says that the question of rights for refugees boils down to the view of the Canadian population.

"The immigration department is mandated by the Canadian Parliament so if they say that being a member of a terrorist organisation is sufficient reason to deport someone, then it reflects the wishes of the Canadian people."

Billings adds that the Canadian government has to think about "how much freedom we want to give up for the safety of the country."

THE PEOPLE'S PRIORITIES?

In the last year, Immigration Canada decided to amend the Immigration Act to prioritise giving immigrant status mainly to those who would invest economically in Canada.

When the changes were announced last year by then Immigration Minister Sergio Marchi, many people came out to protest.

As Winnie Ng of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women told the *Daily* in November 1994, "What Sergio Marchi is doing with the changes to the immigration policy is taking away [its] compassionate and humanitarian aspects..."

Billings himself admits that he stopped working on deportation cases with the Immigration department because it was too "heartbreaking."

But MacTavish maintains that more and more deportations like Baroud's are occurring in Canada.

Jackman and Associates is involved in another case concerning section 40.1 of the Immigration Act.

The case involves a Security Certificate issued against a Canadian resident for having once been a part of a supposedly terrorist organisation.

However, as a resident of Canada, he seemed to have received more of an ear in the judicial system, and the 'grounds' for his Security Certificate were declared unconstitutional.

To MacTavish this only serves to reinforce the idea that non-residents in Canada have few rights.

He believes it is all part of a new hard-line against refugees in this country.

"Canada is becoming more paranoid about protecting itself. There is a movement away from protecting human rights and more towards law and order. This reflects a certain view in Canadian society and the government is afraid to go against it."

The future is our judge

Panel urges grassroots law reform in Canada

by Melissa Radler

In March 1995, Michael Manning was told that without DNA evidence, the man accused of murdering his daughter Tara would walk. But DNA testing had been deemed illegal in section seven of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, so Manning decided to take the law into his own hands.

Within two months, he managed to rally Canadians across the country to support the passing of a bill for DNA testing of violent crime suspects. The significance of Manning's campaign goes beyond his personal victory, as he demonstrated that change can occur from the bottom up.

On January 31, Manning and other law reform advocates gathered in Moot Court for "The Future of Law Reform in Canada," a conference committed to the development of grassroots law reform.

The day-long conference consisted of three panel discussions, and included speakers on legal intervention in the courts, judicial and legislative reform and grassroots approaches to law reform.

Joanne Schweeneiss, a member of the McGill Legal Activists' Society and chief organiser of the conference, said she intended the conference to be a starting point for student involvement in the Canadian legal community.

Emphasising the importance of the individual's contribution to law reform, Schweeneiss called apathy Canada's main cause of legal stagnation.

"We look at the past and judge history and say, 'How could this have happened?' And yet we don't take the initiative for change," maintained Schweeneiss.

For panel member Joseph Oliver, President and Chair of the Executive Office of the Canadian Investment Dealers' Association, this initiative has to come from everyday people.

> "We all have a stake in a legal system that is fair and effective. A single individual can have a profound effect on government legislation."
> — Joseph Oliver, President and Chair of the Executive Office of the Canadian Investment Dealers' Association

"We all have a stake in a legal system that is fair and effective," said Oliver. "A single individual can have a profound effect on government legislation."

Oliver recalled a suggestion he once made as a special assistant to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. 19 years later, his advice turned into the Lobbyist Registration Act, proving to Oliver that his voice had been heard.

Henry Aubin, editorial and Urban Affairs writer for the *Gazette*, elaborated on the role of the media as a catalyst to law reform.

Aubin stated that public attention is contingent on the dedication of lobbyists and dramatic events. "Advocates for a cause can get the media's attention or its boredom," said Aubin.

An example of public attention acting as an agent of reform was the public reaction to the Montréal massacre at École Polytecnique in which 14 women were gunned down in 1989. The massacre was a crucial factor in the creation of Canada's new gun control which came into effect last December.

Professor Wendy Cukier, co-founder of the Coalition for Gun Control, stated that the very context of gun control, by virtue of a public interest in crime and violence, translated into effective public and media support.

"We [the Coalition] didn't really shape public opinion; we simply mobilised it," said Cukier.

"Our role was to make Canadians translate latent beliefs into some kind of political action," she continued.

Using the École Polytecnique massacre as a catalyst, Cukier gained public support by publishing over 20 papers and articles on gun control and crime prevention, and assisted the passage of the gun control legislation.

Cukier spoke on the support as well as the obstacles she has encountered as a legal activist.

One of the biggest challenges to new gun control laws in Canada was the pro-gun institutions such as the Canadian Wildlife Federation. However, Cukier said that this challenge was eventually overcome by increased public awareness of the need for gun control.

For example, of the guns seized in violent crime this year, 88 per cent were legally owned, leaving only 12 per cent to support the myth that illegal gun smuggling accounts for violence.

"When you're looking at lobbying, look where you can get power, exploit what you have and who your opponents are," advised Cukier. "The process depends on the strength of the opposition."

Manning's own campaign for DNA testing was similar to that of Cukier, resting on the promotion widespread public awareness and condemnation. In an effort to protect society from his daughter's murderer and other perpetrators of violent crime, Manning petitioned federal Justice Minister Allan Rock by collecting more than 12 000 signatures in only one week, and crossed Canada in a quest for support of a bill for DNA testing of suspects.

In less than two months, Manning had secured the support of 88 per cent of the population, and transformed his efforts into a law.

Summed up Schweeneiss, "In each of their positions, they [the speakers] have epitomised legal activism and taken the time out of their normal focus to contribute to the legal community."

She noted that the conference's message of grassroots law reform was well-received by both student and faculty.

"As the next generation of policy makers and lawmakers, it's our responsibility to put issues on the table," stated Schweeneiss. "The future will be our judge."

EVENTS EVENTS EVENTS EVENTS

Monday, February 12

• **McGill Student Pugwash** presents a video on Costa Rica: Economic development along environmental lines, 18h Burnside Hall, Room 305.

• **Activist Week Workshop**: Breaking Bureaucracy and Mobilising McGill: Tools and tricks of the trade for organising and lobbying on campus. With SSMU and PGSS executive members. 15h-17h. Shatner B09/B10.

Tuesday, February 13

• The **Black Students' Network** presents a variety of events in celebration of Black History Month. Today: Art Exhibition (Shatner 301); Children's Day, Shatner Ballroom with Storyteller Itah Sadu performing at 10h30 and 14h30. Reggae singer Paula Clark at 14h. Dance workshop at 14h30 by Audley Cohen.

• The **Architecture Undergraduate Society** presents Donald Weikert, dancer from LaLaLa Human Steps, who will give a lecture entitled "Flesh not Concrete", 18h, G-10 Auditorium of the MacDonald-Harrington Building, McGill University, 815 Sherbrooke West.

• The **McGill Institute for the Study of Canada** and the **McGill Centre for Research on Canadian Cultural Industries and Institutions** present Ken Dryden and Rick Gruneau, leading "Can Hockey Be Saved as Canada's National Sport?". Leacock 219, 16h-18h.

• The **Department of History** presents Professor Michael Szonyi speaking on "The Rabbit God: A Chinese Homosexual Cult and its Suppression", 16h, Thomson House, 3650 McTavish.

• **Post-Abortion Support Group**, McGill Women's Union, Shatner 423, 17h.

• **Activist Week Workshop**: Accessing Montreal's Media: Getting your message out beyond the campus confines through radio, TV and print media. With Dermond Travis, PIRA Communications. 12h-14h, Shatner B09/B10.

• **Activist Week Discussion**: Feminist Organising in a Campus Environment. With Cressida Hayes. 15h-17h, Shatner B09/B10.

Wednesday, February 14

• **Walksafe** holds its annual Valentine's Day Charity Drive. Through a bake-sale and solicitation, we will raise money for the Montréal chapter of the Missing Children's Network. 7h30-17h30.

• **Earthsave McGill** hosts its second Earthsave video night, 19h, Shatner 310. Contact Mark Berman at 289-9532 for more information.

• **Young Socialists' Club** presents a disucssion with the participants in the mobilisations in France against cuts to health care, education and social programs, 19h, Shatner 435.

ONGOING

• **Tel-Aide**, a listening service for Montrealers in distress, needs volunteers. Contact 935-1105 for information.

Call for papers for the first **North American Studies Journal**. Any papers from North American Sutdies courses are acceptable. Submit papers to Professor Riggs, Leacock 6th Floor by March 1.

• **Whitewash Campaign**: Interested in information about alternative menstrual products? Come by the Women's Union (Shatner 423).

• **Contactivity Services for Seniors** needs volunteers in their Outreach program. Volunteers are needed during the day in the Westmount area. Contact Joanne at 932-3433.

• **LBGTM's Men's Group** meets Fridays at 19h in the UTC basement (3521 University at Milton).

• **LBGTM's Bisexual Discussion Group** meets Wednesdays at 17h30 in Shatner 423.

• Study **Maimonides** with Rabbis Leigh Lerner and Barbara Bortz. Saturdays, 9h15am at Temple 395 Elm Ave. Contact 937-3575.

EVENTS EVENTS EVENTS EVENTS

Critics want to opt-out of University of Windsor paper

POOR GRAMMAR OR POLITICS?

by Maura Jetté

Editors of the University of Windsor's weekly newspaper, *The Lance*, went head to head with the university's student council in a debate on January 18. Some students have started a petition calling for a referendum concerning their funding of *The Lance*.

The referendum would give students the opportunity to instigate an opt-out policy for this obligatory funding.

Mike MacNeill, University of Windsor Student Association (UWSA) councilor, started the petition, claiming that *The Lance* is irresponsible in its reporting and layout, and that very few students actually read the paper.

Lance news editor James Cruikshank believes that MacNeill's grievances originate from the fact that the paper brings the UWSA council to task on various issues affecting the student body at Windsor.

The annual fee of $4.50 per full-time student funds approximately one-third of *The Lance*'s expenses. "The remaining two-thirds of our funding comes from our advertisers", explained Cruikshank.

Although the petition for the referendum has not yet been officially presented to council, UWSA councilor Stephanie Letarte voiced her opinion concerning the role of the paper at the council meeting of January 18.

"We pay you [*The Lance*] to report on what we [council] want to hear."

MacNeill outlined his views of the sole University of Windsor paper, claiming "I have reviewed 12 university newspapers from across the country, and I am embarassed to say that *The Lance* is the worst in terms of material, organization and grammar"

MacNeill claims that his principle aim is to force The Lance to "shape up."

"We're not looking to get rid of it. We just want [*The Lance]* to be more responsible in its reporting."

Cruikshank, however, feels that *The Lance* is already responsible in its reporting in that they report on the facts, regardless of whom they are exposing — including the UWSA council.

Cruikshank admitted that he and Cheryl Clark, editor-in-chief of *The Lance* "had a good laugh about MacNeill's claims about poor grammar and organization." Cruikshank pointed out that "Cheryl has won three Ontario Community Awards" for other newspapers on which she had worked before taking on her position at *The Lance*.

Both Cruikshank and Clark feel that MacNeill's grievances are solely material-related. "[MacNeill] may claim that it is the grammar that started this whole thing, but there is a lot more to it than a few typos," asserted Cruikshank.

Cruikshank believes that the petition is a reaction to *The Lance*'s critical reporting of council's activities. "This is the first year that the council has had to watch what they say in their meetings," said Cruikshank, "before they didn't have to do that".

Specifically, Cruikshank referred to Lancerfest, a recent rock-concert organised by council to raise money for the school.

"We [*The Lance*] reported on Lancerfest, for which the University of Windsor lost 43 thousand dollars."

According to Cruikshank, council denied the financial loss for months, and when *The Lance* finally uncovered and reported on it, students rightfully held the council responsible. "That's why this whole thing started," claimed Cruikshank.

MacNeill did not address the subject of the Lancerfest story, but believes that only five percent of the student body reads *The Lance*, and the rest of the students "may skim through it out of boredom."

MacNeill claims that "dozens of students have come to him complaining about the Lance," but Cruikshank wonders "how a couple of dozen students can speak for 10 000."

"15 or 20 per cent of the student body will opt out if and when they are given the chance," speculated MacNeill. When faced with these figures, Cruikshank countered that "if some students do opt-out, it won't be to the point that it will hurt us financially."

MacNeill needed 500 signatures of full-time students in order for the petition to be allowed, and he claimed that he has already obtained in excess of 600. MacNeill stated that he "is shooting to double that, so [the referendum] will be a definite go."

Cruikshank thinks that MacNeill will have to "re-do the entire petition," because many of the signatures obtained were those of non full-time students. According to Cruikshank, over half of the signatures were obtained from part-time students, visitors and staff.

Cruikshank speculated that MacNeill "more or less wanted to scare us [*The Lance*], and get [us] to change our tune". However, Cruikshank doesn't see a need for changing their reporting tactics, further stating, "we [*The Lance*] haven't changed, and we aren't going to."

Regardless of the situation at hand, Cruikshank believed that "it could take months and months before they actually hold the referendum."

MacNeill recognised that it could take time, but was confident that the referendum would eventually go through. "It will happen."

CONTINUED FROM THE COVER

RELIGIOUS STUDIES THREATHENED

decisions affecting all faculty members.

Late last year, Runnalls was told that no new hiring committee would be formed "at this time" to find her successor. Runnalls' ten-year term as dean will expire this May.

Skerrett confirmed that in September, only an acting dean would be appointed.

Not only is the staff in potential jeopardy, but just prior to the winter holidays, the faculty's library also received a memo stating that it will close on May 31.

The memo, sent by Library Branch Services co-ordinator Michael. Renshawe, vaguely stated that one librarian and some books would be transferred to McLennan Library. The future of the remaining resources remains unclear.

But Skerrett feels that the faculty's legal agreement with the Joint Board of Theological Colleges will make it difficult for administrators to alter the status of the faculty or of its library.

"The Joint Board donated the Birks building and the endowment income in exchange for the university's agreement to educate ministry students in its academic programs," Skerrett explained.

She said that for this reason, "it seems to me that if you have made an agreement, and performed it for decades in good faith, then you do not suddenly or unilaterally break it, unless there are compelling reasons to do so."

According to minutes from a recent faculty meeting, the Joint Board feels that "the time has come to communicate with the university through its lawyers."

A POSITIVE DIRECTION?

Last year, the administration made a move to close the faculty's library, but was stalled by the involvement of the Joint Board and the work done by Professor Victor Hori and the Faculty's library committee.

Jen Nicholson stressed that "students have a role to play too. We can't just sit around and wait for professors to figure out what's happening."

Currently Religious Studies Undergraduate Student Council is planning for an action meeting after reading week.

While waiting for a response from the administration and the Joint Board to a report of recommendations submitted by the faculty, Runnalls and Skerrett continue to envision a positive direction for the faculty.

Both would particularly like to see the position of a professor of ethics filled, as well as an expansion in the faculty's breadth of course offerings.

Skerrett is confident that the faculty will emerge stronger in spite, or perhaps because of the current task of self-scrutinisation.

"I would want to assure students that the faculty and the administration all agree that we want to provide a superb education and learning environment for McGill students, " noted Skerrett.

"It is this common purpose that convinces me that we will find a way through the present unease... Our faculty still remains one of the best in the country."

Friends of the Lubicon

law suits against activists' efforts on the grounds that they intend to harm a company's profitability.

"SLAPP suits are used to shock, scare, and shut up opposition," said Wristen.

Kenda says Daishowa's case has no grounds in terms of a means of economic reprisal.

"It does not make sense because during the time the boycott was on, the profits of the paper bag company went up," said Kenda.

But Cochran says this is not a SLAPP suit because Daishowa does not object to boycotts, per se. They object to boycotts designed to inflict economic damage to the company.

"I don't see how it could be a SLAPP suit," said Cochran. "We are not trying to stop the boycott. But the Friends of the Lubicon go after the customers instead of the company. They broke the rules.

"It looks bad to have people picketing outside your storefront."

Wristen says SLAPP suits are dangerous because defendants often just stop raising concerns because they cannot afford to pay the legal bills.

"Activists end up having to decide, What is more important, your house or your legal bills?" said Wristen.

Wristen says people must become aware that corporations are using the judicial system to silence dissenting voices.

"If you are being sued it may be . . . used to shut you up," she said.

Cochran says threatening the financial viability of a small subsidiary of Daishowa Inc. is not worth it.

But all boycotts are undertaken with the intention of having an economic impact on the company, points out Karen Wristen, a legal representative from the Sierra Legal Defense Fund and the defense lawyer in this Ontario Court case.

"This means any boycott could be considered illegal and no political activist will know if what they plan is illegal," said Wristen.

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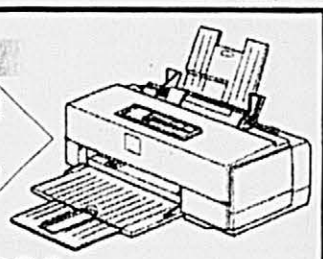

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